

Per California Code of Regulations, title 2, section 548.5, the following information will be posted to CalHR's Career Executive Assignment Action Proposals website for 30 calendar days when departments propose new CEA concepts or major revisions to existing CEA concepts. Presence of the department-submitted CEA Action Proposal information on CalHR's website does not indicate CalHR support for the proposal.

A. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Date

05/15/2017

2. Department

California Department of Fish and Wildlife

3. Organizational Placement (Division/Branch/Office Name)

Region 6 - Inland Deserts Region

4. CEA Position Title

Salton Sea Program Manager

5. Summary of proposed position description and how it relates to the program's mission or purpose. (2-3 sentences)

This position will perform high level coordination and implementation of the Salton Sea Management Plan (SSMP) and habitat conservation efforts. The incumbent will ensure the management of the Salton Sea meets state policy objectives and will coordinate efforts with the Natural Resources Agency, the Department of Water Resources, and other state agencies and stakeholders. The CEA will also participate in the Quantification Settlement Agreement as the department representative for the Colorado River as it relates to the SSMP.

6. Reports to: (Class Title/Level)

Regional Manager, CEA Level A

7. Relationship with Department Director (Select one)

- Member of department's Executive Management Team, and has frequent contact with director on a wide range of department-wide issues.
- Not a member of department's Executive Management Team but has frequent contact with the Executive Management Team on policy issues.

(Explain): As Program Manager, the CEA will have frequent contact with the Executive Management Team on all policy matters relating to the Salton Sea.

8. Organizational Level (Select one)

- 1st
- 2nd
- 3rd
- 4th
- 5th (mega departments only - 17,001+ allocated positions)

B. SUMMARY OF REQUEST

9. What are the duties and responsibilities of the CEA position? Be specific and provide examples.

Under the general direction of the Regional Manager of the Inland Deserts Region, with direction from the Natural Resources Agency Assistant Secretary for Salton Sea Policy, this position is responsible for performing high level coordination and implementation oversight and ensuring the Salton Sea Management Plan (SSMP) and habitat conservation in and around the Salton Sea to meet state policy objectives. This position will act as the department's lead for the Salton Sea planning effort and will manage budget and personnel resources for the Salton Sea program. This position will also work closely with the Natural Resources Agency, the Department of Water Resources and other state, federal, and local agencies and stakeholders to promote implementation of the SSMP in a manner that considers broad stakeholder views and goals. Acting as the department's liaison for the SSMP, this position will also coordinate regularly with a multi-agency group comprised of state and federal regulatory and funding agencies to represent the states interests as the SSMP is implemented.

Functions include:

Participate in the development and implementation of the Salton Sea Management Plan (SSMP), in coordination with Natural Resources Agency and the Department of Water Resources. Manage department's budget and personnel resources for the Salton Sea program. Participate in conference calls, in-person meetings, and workshops as the department's SSMP representative is expected. Coordination with the Natural Resources Agency and the Department of Water Resources, as well as other state, federal, and local agencies and stakeholders to ensure that projects, within the SSMP, are consistent with the department's goals and objectives, as well as making sure timelines are met. Provide input on the department's activities in and around the Salton Sea. Participate on various committees along with other program staff for the SSMP, including but not limited to, the Long Range Planning Committee, the Project Committee, the Environmental Compliance Committee, and the Air Quality Committee.

Participate in the implementation Team (IT), which ensures that the department and three water agencies satisfy their mandates from the Quantification Settlement Agreement (QSA) relating to water transfers and the Salton Sea. The position will be the lead in the development of documentation relating to compliance with the State and Federal endangered species acts and related regulations.

This position will also work closely with local, regional, and state water agencies involved in implementation of the Quantification Settlement Agreement (QSA) for the Colorado River as it related to the SSMP and may at the discretion of the department's Director, represent the department on the QSA Joint powers Authority. This position includes providing leadership in setting priorities as the SSMP and other Salton Sea habitat conservation programs are implemented, updating and managing the Salton Sea budget, identifying and developing any needed new policies in conjunction with the department Directorate, and identifying and developing partnerships for implementation of the department's programs.

Knowledge of general principles of the Salton Sea, the SSMP applicable environmental laws and leadership and management principles is required. In addition, the incumbent is expected to closely monitor and manage politically sensitive elements of the above programs and keep the Regional Manager, Assistant Secretary, and the Directorate apprised of any developing significant issues. The incumbent must have strong collaborative abilities, actively foster partnerships, have a broad understanding of biological, political, and legal issues and policies associated with the above programs, and the ability to assist the Regional Manager and Assistant Secretary to accomplish specific goals. The position requires both highly independent and team actions, both of which involve highly specific goals. The position requires both highly independent and team actions, both of which involve highly sensitive public and Legislative contacts. The incumbent may act as the Regional Manager in the Manager's absence.

B. SUMMARY OF REQUEST (continued)

10. How critical is the program's mission or purpose to the department's mission as a whole? Include a description of the degree to which the program is critical to the department's mission.

- Program is directly related to department's primary mission and is critical to achieving the department's goals.
- Program is indirectly related to department's primary mission.
- Program plays a supporting role in achieving department's mission (i.e., budget, personnel, other admin functions).

Description: The mission of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife is to manage California's diverse fish, wildlife, and plant resources, and the habitats upon which they depend, for their ecological values and for their use and enjoyment by the public. Preserving the Salton Sea ecosystem directly falls in line with the department's mission of managing California's diverse fish, wildlife, and plant resources.

Declining inflows into the Salton Sea in future years will result in collapse of the Salton Sea ecosystem. This is due to increasing salinity and other water quality issues, such as temperature, eutrophication, and related anoxia and algal productivity. For example, pileworms and barnacles, primary components of the Salton Sea food web, already appear to be impacted by deteriorating water quality. Tilapia, which is presently the primary forage species for piscivorous (fish-eating) birds at the Salton Sea, may be eliminated when salinity exceeds 60 parts per thousand (ppt). Salinity reached 50 ppt in 2008 and could exceed 60 ppt as early as 2018. Tilapia would likely continue to persist in areas of lower salinity where the rivers, creeks, and agricultural drains enter the Salton Sea. However, the loss of fish populations from the open water area would significantly reduce and possibly eliminate use of the Salton Sea by piscivorous birds, such as pelicans, double-crested cormorants, and black skimmers by the early 2020s. Some of these birds could use the areas where the rivers, creeks, and drains enter the Salton Sea if fish continue to persist in these locations. In addition, the relative abundance of bird species that forage on invertebrates likely would change over time with increases in salinity and resultant changes in the invertebrate community.

The Quantification Settlement Agreement (QSA) is one of the factors contributing to declining inflows to the Salton Sea. California historically used more than its normal year apportionment of Colorado River water, obtaining the excess from water apportioned to Arizona and Nevada but not used by those states, and by water designated as surplus by the Secretary of the Interior. The amount of unused apportionment previously available to California has diminished, however, and is unlikely to be available in the future. After prolonged negotiations between the Federal government and the California water districts that have entitlements to Colorado River water, a series of agreements, collectively known as the QSA, were made among the Federal government, State of California, IID, Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, San Diego County Water Authority, and Coachella Valley Water District in October 2003. The QSA imposes water conservation measures within the IID service area to allow the transfer of this water elsewhere, which reduces the volume of agricultural runoff that constitutes the Salton Sea's chief source of water. IID is required to provide conserved water to the Sea to mitigate the effects of the transfer on salinity until 2017. After 2017, however, the Sea's salinity is expected to exceed the tolerance limit for fish and, thus, mitigation for effects on salinity ceases at that time. The reduction in water to the Sea after 2017 is anticipated to result in loss of the fishery, exposure of soils to wind erosion, and bird declines due to loss of food. Reduction of inflows to the Sea from other factors, such as water recycling in Mexico, is also contributing to increases in salinity and a declining sea elevation. The proposed Salton Sea Program Manager will be responsible for developing and implementing policy to properly manage and conserve the ecosystem of the Salton Sea.

B. SUMMARY OF REQUEST (continued)

11. Describe what has changed that makes this request necessary. Explain how the change justifies the current request. Be specific and provide examples.

The Salton Sea is 100 miles east of San Diego and is fed by runoff from Imperial County farms. A water transfer agreement, the Quantification Settlement Agreement (QSA), that sends water from Imperial County farms to the San Diego region and the Coachella Valley has reduced the amount of water going into the sea. This has caused wildlife habitat to suffer and has increased the amount of airborne dust from the exposed land. This is expected to worsen when mitigation water is scheduled to stop going into the sea at the end of 2017.

In July of 2016, Governor Jerry Brown, for the first time, included \$80.5 million in the state budget to support efforts to conserve the Salton Sea. The first step is implementing a Salton Sea Management Plan to preserve clean air, the ecosystem wealth, and create a stable water supply. Governor Brown has created a Salton Sea Task Force which has directed agencies to develop comprehensive management plans for the Sea that will meet a short-term goal of 9000 acres to 12000 acres of habitat and dust suppression projects and set a medium-term plan to construct 18000 acres to 25000 acres of habitat and dust suppression projects. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife is in need of a CEA to develop and implement the department's management plan as it relates to the Salton Sea.

As a result of the QSA, the Imperial Irrigation District and the San Diego County Water Authority agreed to send fresh water to the Salton Sea to replace water from the Colorado River that was diverted under the QSA. However, this "agreement" to send water to the Salton Sea will end December of 2017 and measures must be taken to prevent the drying out of the Salton Sea. Water will continue flowing out of the Salton Sea, however without an agreement in place, water will no longer flow into the sea.

The goal of the Salton Sea Management Program is to develop a transparent process with clearly defined goals and measurable objectives aligned with available fiscal and hydrological resources. Each process developed by the department will be overseen by the State Water Resources Control Board and California Air Resources Board. The Salton Sea Program Manager is needed to develop and implement the Salton Sea Management Program, ensure compliance with state policy, and facilitate implementation with other state agencies. This position will also serve as a liaison with the Department of Water Resources, Natural Resources Agency, and the Salton Sea Task Force, in addition to other participating state and federal agencies. The Salton Sea Program Manager will also participate in the QSA as it relates to the Salton Sea Management Program, to restore the environmental health of the Salton Sea. As these changes approach, it is vital to create a position devoted to the management of the Salton Sea.

C. ROLE IN POLICY INFLUENCE

12. Provide 3-5 specific examples of policy areas over which the CEA position will be the principle policy maker. Each example should cite a policy that would have an identifiable impact. Include a description of the statewide impact of the assigned program.

The primary objective of the CEA is to perform high level coordination and oversight of the implementation of the Salton Sea Management Plan to ensure the stability of the Salton Sea ecosystem, along with participation in the Quantification Settlement Agreement (QSA) as it relates to the Salton Sea, which are achieved through legislative and regulatory actions. Legislative and regulatory actions are additional factors that significantly influences CDFW's operations and its success in conserving the Salton Sea habitat. As a result, the CEA is responsible for evaluating existing statutory and regulatory authorities and providing expert consultation to the Regional Manager and Chief Deputy Director. The CEA will provide oversight and direction to members of the Salton Sea Management Program regarding the development and implementation for the program per State policies, applicable laws and regulations, in addition to coordinating with other State agencies in the development of the Salton Sea Management Program.

The Salton Sea Program Manager will be responsible for CDFW policy development and implementation of the Salton Sea Management Program. All department policy, as it relates to the Salton Sea and habitat conservation of the sea, will also fall under the direction of the Program Manager. This includes the restoration of long-term stable aquatic and shoreline habitat for the historic levels and diversity of fish and wildlife that depend on the Salton Sea, elimination of air quality impacts from the restoration projects, and protection of the water quality.

Another policy area includes state-wide, interagency development and implementation of the Salton Sea Management Program. The Salton Sea Program Manager will work closely with the Natural Resources Agency, the Department of Water Resources, and other state, federal, and local agencies and stakeholders to create policy and promote implementation state-wide regarding the Salton Sea. Coordination with Legislature, various federal, State, and local agencies, stakeholders, and the general public is needed to implement restoration activities at the Salton Sea. Developing and implementing a consensus building policy and process for the Stakeholders of the Salton Sea Management Program will also be under the direction of the Program Manager.

The Salton Sea Program Manager will also participate in an Implementation Team, creating state-wide policy to ensure that the department along with the three water agencies satisfy their mandates from the Quantification Settlement Agreement (QSA) relating to water transfer and the Salton Sea.

C. ROLE IN POLICY INFLUENCE (continued)

13. What is the CEA position's scope and nature of decision-making authority?

The Salton Sea Program Manager will have regular involvement in developing department-wide policies to provide the best achievable protection of the Salton Sea's ecosystem through the Salton Sea Management Plan (SSMP) and help conserve, and protect the Sea's fish and wildlife resources, and the habitats upon which they depend, in addition to providing the necessary oversight over the department during the implementation process of the policies and procedures developed by the CEA. The incumbent will be the department's SSMP representative and will manage the department's budget for the program.

The Salton Sea Program Manager serves in an important role of providing policy-level direction on all department programs related to fulfillment of the Salton Sea Management Plan, including the political, legal, and logistical protection of the Salton Sea and associated air quality of the surrounding environments. Accordingly, the Program Manager's primary objective is to evaluate, plan, and direct the department-wide Salton Sea Management Program, followed by oversight of the implementation of the program.

The Salton Sea Program Manager is responsible for evaluating existing statutory and regulatory authorities, providing expert consultation to the Regional Manager and Chief Deputy Director on department-wide policies, and the need for SSMP-directed proposals to amend current statutory and regulatory authorities to align the department's mission and objectives with state and federal mandates. The CEA evaluates the programs' fiscal needs, prepares SSMP's budget proposals, and presents them to the Regional Manager and Chief Deputy Director.

This position will be the department's authority in all legislative, regulatory, public and external affairs matters that involve the department's specific and separate mission related to the conservation of the Salton Sea and the associated Quantification Settlement Agreement regarding water transfer in and out of the Salton Sea. These actions will involve regular and close communication and collaboration with the California Natural Resource Agency, Department of Water Resources, and other state and federal agencies. The Program Manager will be responsible to lead the development of documentation relating to compliance with the State and Federal endangered species acts and related regulations and ensure that mandates as they relate to the QSA are satisfied by the department. The Program Manager will provide oversight and direction to members of the SSMP regarding the development and implementation of the program per State policies, applicable laws and regulations.

14. Will the CEA position be developing and implementing new policy, or interpreting and implementing existing policy? How?

The Salton Sea Program Manager will develop and implement new Salton Sea policy for the Department of Fish and Wildlife. Policy for the Salton Sea Management Program will require regular coordination with the Department of Water Resources and the California Natural Resources Agency. This includes developing department policies and procedures to ensure that the department's Salton Sea Management Program meets state-wide policy objectives. As the leader over the department's Salton Sea Management Program, the CEA will set priorities as the Salton Sea Management Program and other Salton Sea habitat conservation programs are implemented, update and manage the SSMP budget, identify and develop any needed new policies in conjunction with the department Directorate, and identify and develop partnerships for implementation of the department's programs.

This will also require the Salton Sea Program Manager to interpret existing state policy as it relates to the Salton Sea and oversee implementation of state-wide policy department-wide as necessary.